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PRESS ADVISORY

No. 192-P
September 20, 1994

Secretary of Defense William Perry will speak to the Annual Meeting of the American Business Conference on Wednesday, September 21, 1994 at 2:15 p.m. (EDT) at the Willard Intercontinental Hotel, Pierce Room, 14th and Pennsylvania Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C.

The event will be open to the news media. The point of contact Mary Lou Galvin at (202) 822-9300.

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NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE (PUBLIC AFFAIRS)

WASHINGTON, D.C. - 20301

PLEASE NOTE DATE

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No. 550 94

(7-3)69'-5 1(media)

(7-3)69'-3 2(copies)

(7-3)69'-5 7(public/industry)

IMMEDIATE

September 23, 1994

REMARKS BY THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
ON THE MER CAN BUSINESS
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 1994

Early this morning, President directed me to begin planning for military operations in Haiti. I was to prepare two contingencies. The first one, which we called phase one, was to conduct a forcible entry into Haiti; and the second, which we called phase two, was, once we were in Haiti -- whether entered forcibly or peaceably -- to establish security on the island and prepare for the return of the legal government. We gave this assignment to Admiral Paul David Miller, the Commander-in-Chief of Atlantic Command in Norfolk. He prepared a detailed military plan for carrying out these two phases. In my judgment this was a brilliant plan. Among other things, it involved a novel, even unique, use of jointness, including an amphibious assault conducted by Army forces, not Marine forces, based not on amphibious assault ships but on an aircraft carrier.

This summer we conducted intense training including detailed rehearsals for every major aspect of this plan. On September 10th, just 11 days ago, the President directed me to prepare to implement this plan as soon as possible. I reported to him, at that time, that we would be ready to implement it somewhere between September 19th and September 24th, depending on the difficulties encountered in bringing the complex logistics involved up to speed.

As it turned out, all of that went smoothly. We called up the ready reserve fleet and 1,600 members of our selected reserve force, mostly tactical airlift personnel and military police. And we began the movement of warships, supply ships, tactical aircraft, airlift aircraft, and, of course, our ground combat forces.

Last Monday, Wednesday, and then again Saturday, I visited these forces as they were deploying. I met with all of our commanders several times, and met with about 4,000 of our troops in the field. I have to tell you, this was a sight to behold, watching this large, complex military operation get underway.

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The logistics performance was absolutely superb. I contrast it to Desert Storm, where we stubbed our toe rather badly trying to get our transport ships out of mothballs and into the fleet. This time, it went off very, very smoothly because of the lessons we learned from Desert Storm and changes we implemented to make our ships in the ready reserve fleet truly ready.

Our military systems were at their peak performance. Our troops were at peak readiness with high morale. The commanders, all of them, were ready and confident. So, on Saturday, I reported to the President that we were ready, and told him we were prepared to go on the first date of the window I'd given him before, which was 19 September. But I suggested that he develop a personal confidence in that judgment by talking, himself, with the commanders in the field. We used some modern technology to do that. We set up a video-teleconferencing system over secure lines at noon on Saturday. The President was able to sit down and talk with each of the component commanders in the field, get their report, and query them about their readiness and their satisfaction with the plan.

At the end of that meeting, the President concluded, as I had, that they were in a high state of readiness. He complimented Admiral Miller on the brilliance of the operational plan, and he remarked that he wished all of the American people had been able to sit through that video-teleconference so they could get the same confidence that he had gotten in the capabilities of the American military.

On the basis of that judgment and my recommendation, the President ordered me to prepare to execute the plan on Monday, one minute after midnight. That was the appointed time.

Sunday turned out to be a day of unique drama. I spent nearly all day at the White House. There were two events unfolding in parallel. From about two o'clock in the afternoon on, we were beginning the preliminary positioning movements we needed to conduct a midnight invasion. But at the same time all of these preliminary movements were going on -- as the paratroopers packed their bags at Fort Bragg and SEALs went into the water for preliminary reconnaissance -- our negotiating team was still in Port-au-Prince talking with General Cedras.

That was not by plan. The plan was to finish the negotiations by noon and leave, whether or not we had a deal. Well, noon came and went. President Carter called President Clinton and said that he didn't have a deal yet, but it was imminent and he couldn't leave when he was that close. He needed just another hour or two to close it. So for the next four hours -- some of the most tense four hours I've ever spent -- our troops and forces were moving to get ready for the invasion, and our negotiators were still talking in Port-au-Prince.

About six o'clock, President Clinton called President Carter and directed him to break off negotiations and leave immediately. That's when President Carter announced, "I now have my deal." The deal had come together, magically, in the

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hour before -- at the same time, in fact, that General Biamby had discovered that our paratroopers were packing up at Fort Bragg and going into the air. We'll never know how much that discovery influenced his thinking. But it is a fact that the Haitians' decision to accept the agreement occurred about 15 minutes after that.

With the agreement, our negotiating team stayed behind, worked out the final language, and President Clinton approved it. Mr. Jonassaint, in Port-au-Prince, approved it. And the President, about eight o'clock, directed me to terminate the assault. By that time, we had more than 60 aircraft in the air on their way to Haiti. This is going about as close to the brink as I would ever care to go. At the same time, the President directed me to begin phase two -- the peaceful entry -- the next morning.

I'm going to tell you a little bit about what has happened in the past few days. But before I do that, let me ask philosophically, Should we Americans even care about what's going on in Haiti? In other words, Where does our national interest lie in Haiti? And, second, even if you concede a national interest, Is our national interest sufficient to justify military action? Those questions have been raised both in the public and in the Congress. I'd like to take a minute to direct my attention to those questions.

On the question of national interest, I start with the observation that, in the last decade, there has been a powerful trend toward democracy in the Western Hemisphere. Nearly every country in the Western Hemisphere now has an elected government. And the stability that has resulted is in marked contrast to the situation there decades earlier. That trend extended to Haiti in 1990, when there was a free and fair election, which elected Aristide as President with almost 70 percent of the vote.

Then, in 1991, that decision of the voters was reversed by a military coup, and Aristide was overthrown and driven from the country. At that time the coup was denounced by President Bush and by Secretary of State Baker, in the strongest possible terms. Both of them asserted that democracy in Haiti was in the national interest of the United States, and called for the restoration of democracy in that country.

Their rationale then was the same as our rationale now: that instability and insecurity of neighbors does affect the security and interests of the United States. And the closer to the United States, the greater the interest.

The refugee flow from Haiti has been one of the most obvious examples of the negative consequences of instability in that country. Tens of thousands of Haitians have been trying to leave the country. We already have 14,000 of them housed in Guantanamo. The decision to house them in Guantanamo was made consistent with our long-standing policy recognizing the right of political asylum, and to keep them from drowning at sea. We had very few alternatives if we wanted to uphold

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those two principles. One alternative was to settle them in the southeast United States, particularly in Florida. The other alternative was to provide a safe haven for them. We chose the second alternative. We are providing a safe haven for them at Guantanamo. More recently, we've gotten permission from several other Caribbean countries to set up safe havens in their countries. But this has required effort, and it has required substantial resources.

Even if you accept the position that insecurity and instability in Haiti affects our national interests, there is still a fair question as to whether our national interests in Haiti justify military action. To address that question, I want to make a distinction between national interest and supreme national interest. I think of those two in very different ways, and the actions we can, or should, take are very different in those two cases.

By supreme national interest, I mean an action that can threaten the survival of the United States or one of our allies. The attack by Japan on Pearl Harbor was a clear example of an action which threatened the survival of the United States.

In recent history, there are only two examples of our supreme national interest being affected. The Soviet Union during the Cold War threatened the survival of the United States and, therefore, we were prepared to go to full scale war to deal with that threat. We built up substantial military forces capable of doing that, with the hopes that those forces would deter the Soviet Union and prevent a war.

Now, we have friendly relations with Russia, but Russia still has 25,000 nuclear weapons. Therefore, we're still concerned about the possibility of reversal of reform in Russia which could lead to the return of a government hostile to the West, a government that still has 25,000 nuclear weapons in its possession. So we still have a situation in Russia that potentially affects the supreme national interest of the United States.

The only other example today is the threat of an attack from North Korea against our ally South Korea. North Korea has a million troops, two-thirds of them massed along the border. And in the last few years, they have been developing nuclear weapons. Therefore, I believe that the threat from North Korea to South Korea affects the supreme national interest of the United States; and therefore, we should be prepared to go to full scale war, if necessary, to deal with that threat. Again, our expectation would be that making that threat and having the capability to make good on the threat should deter North Korea and prevent a war.

There are many situations where our national interests are involved, but not our supreme national interest. The two most obvious examples today are in Bosnia and in Haiti. I draw a sharp distinction between these and the previous cases, because the latter do not involve the survival of the United States and, therefore,

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we don't contemplate a full scale war, or even the threat of full scale war, to deal with these problems.

The tool available to deal with these kinds of problems is what I call coercive diplomacy. That's a combination of diplomacy on the one hand, and military power and the threat to use it on the other.

On Sunday night, we saw a classic example of coercive diplomacy. I should emphasize that coercive diplomacy is not using military power instead of diplomacy, it's using military power in the service of diplomacy.

Winston Churchill once said, "Superior force is a powerful persuader." It is, and we have a superior force. But for that superior force to truly persuade, we must not only have the capability, we must have the political will to use it. Both of those we had in Haiti.

A third ingredient, however, is also necessary. That's credibility, which means the side you're trying to convince has to believe you. There's no question that the Haitians believed we had superior military power, but it was not clear they believed that we had the will to use it.

Indeed, apparently our credibility was not fully established until we had 60 aircraft in the air on the way to Haiti. At that point, it was impossible for them to doubt the seriousness of our resolve.

I believe it was only that imminent use of our military force that finally made our threat credible to the military leaders of Haiti. This accomplished the first task, then, of forcing Cedras and others to relinquish power.

Some have argued that we should have forced them from office immediately, that the agreement we made with them did not go far enough. It was defective. But that would have raised the risk and put American lives in greater danger than necessary -- and not just American lives, but Haitian lives as well. The gain, in any event, would be only symbolic. In reality, the Haitian military leaders effectively lost power as soon as American military forces landed at Port-au-Prince.

They will continue to play a role in helping maintain order on the island for a short time. But the American military will be calling the shots. We have achieved that, to this point, without any American blood being shed, and we arrived as friends, instead of invaders.

In General Powell's words, we did this without "American youngsters killing Haitian youngsters, and Haitian youngsters killing American youngsters." That's no small accomplishment. It's good for the Haitians, and it's definitely good for us. Our country owes, I believe, an enormous debt of gratitude to the negotiators -- President Carter, Senator Nunn, and General Powell. They performed a great

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service, not only for the country, but for the Haitian people as well. This was an effective job of diplomacy in very difficult, very tense, and I might say, very dangerous circumstances.

This agreement now starts us on our way, without bloodshed, to accomplishing our national objectives in Haiti -- to protect democracy in our hemisphere, to secure our borders, to start a long-term solution to the refugee problem, and to stop the atrocities going on in that country.

To this point, we have landed 8,000 troops in Haiti. The Haitian army not only has not resisted, but they've actually offered some cooperation to our troops as they landed. The first troops went in Monday morning. As of the end of this day, we'll have 8,000 ashore. We have complete control of the airport and port at Port-au-Prince, and of all of the heavy weapons in the Haitian army. Today we landed more than 1,000 Marines at the second largest city in Haiti, Cap-Haitien. We've unloaded dozens of heavy lift aircraft. We've already fully unloaded two roll-on/roll-off ships and have several more in the process of unloading.

This has been a very successful and effective operation. But we also understood from the beginning that this would be a difficult operation, and there are still many challenges and many risks ahead of us. The first example of the kind of challenges we're going to be running into occurred yesterday. There was a clash between demonstrators and Haitian police in which the police used unnecessary force. The police, basically, were out of control trying to stop the demonstration. A question has been raised, "What is the proper role of the U.S. military in this Haitian-on-Haitian violence?"

This morning, General Shelton, the commander of our forces, met with General Cedras and explained, carefully and precisely, the importance that we place on the Haitian police not over-reacting to demonstrations and the importance of achieving discipline in the police. He has a pledge of full cooperation and made arrangements for U.S. military police to oversee and monitor the Haitian police as they go about their duties.

A second thing that happened today was that we have landed more than 1,000 U.S. military police. They were not in the first wave. In the first wave we had combat forces. We wanted to put in a sufficient quantity of combat forces to protect our own troops in the event that the landing was not peaceful. That was our first responsibility.

Those of you who saw the first landing at the airport saw us going in with full combat gear, fully prepared to fight our way in if we had to. We did not believe we could simply trust the agreement that had been made. So in the first two days our emphasis was getting in combat troops.

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The combat troops did not have the job of doing police functions in Haiti. That's the job of the military police. They came in on the second and third day. So we now have in place the military police force to accomplish this task.

We also have in place a large enough compliment of combat troops. By the end of this week, we will have 14,000 troops in place, and a company of Bradley fighting vehicles. So if police get out of control to the extent that there is a general breakdown of order, we have a quick reaction force of combat troops, including Bradleys, that can go to restore order.

We expect a difficult task ahead. But I believe the operation has gone very, very well to this date. It requires, and will continue to require in the weeks ahead, very competent U.S. military forces. Very disciplined forces.

I have full confidence in our forces. I believe that the American people can be very proud of their military forces that are in Haiti today. They are operating on a superb plan. They've executed the logistics flawlessly. They've introduced very effective weapon systems. They have outstanding commanders, and the troops themselves are as capable and disciplined as any military force anywhere in the world.

In addition to that, I believe the American people can be thankful that our military troops are going into Haiti as friends and not as invaders.

Thank you very much.

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